

Empowerment or Pressure? Exploring the Impact of Female Body Depictions in Body Positivity Instagram Posts on Self-Objectification

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Background

Body Positivity (BoPo) encourages self-love and positive body image. Multiple studies have linked viewing BoPo to improved body image.

Yet, BoPo on Instagram induces self-objectification (e.g., Cohen et al., 2019).

Which aspects of BoPo stand behind elevated self-objectification?

Objectification theory

Portrayals of bodies within BoPo posts

Objective

RQ: Do women exposed to BoPo that depicts female bodies have a higher level of state self-objectification than women exposed to BoPo that does not depict female bodies?

Sample

N = 187 young adult women aged 18-29 (M = 21.6, SD = 2.3)
89% students (14% psychology students)

Results

Finding 1. Exposure to female body within BoPo posts did not lead to higher state self-objectification

Finding 2. Trait self-objectification, negative mood, and attitudes toward BoPo did not moderate the effect of images of the female body in BoPo on state self-objectification

Finding 3. Trait self-objectification and negative mood significantly predicted state self-objectification

Procedure

Preregistered between-subjects online experiment

- 10 BoPo with bodies (experimental group)
- 10 BoPo without bodies (control group)
- Online questionnaire

Pre-exposure measures

- Negative mood (Visual Analog Scale; Tiggemann & Andrew, 2012), trait self-objectification (Self-Objectification Questionnaire; Wollast et al., 2021), attitude toward BoPo (self-developed)

Post-exposure measures

- State self-objectification (Ten Statement test; Fredrickson et al., 1998; Body Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale; McKinley & Hyde, 1996)

Conclusion

Portrayals of bodies may not drive elevated self-objectification after viewing BoPo

Potential explanation - objectification potential of the text, desensitization to the depicted bodies

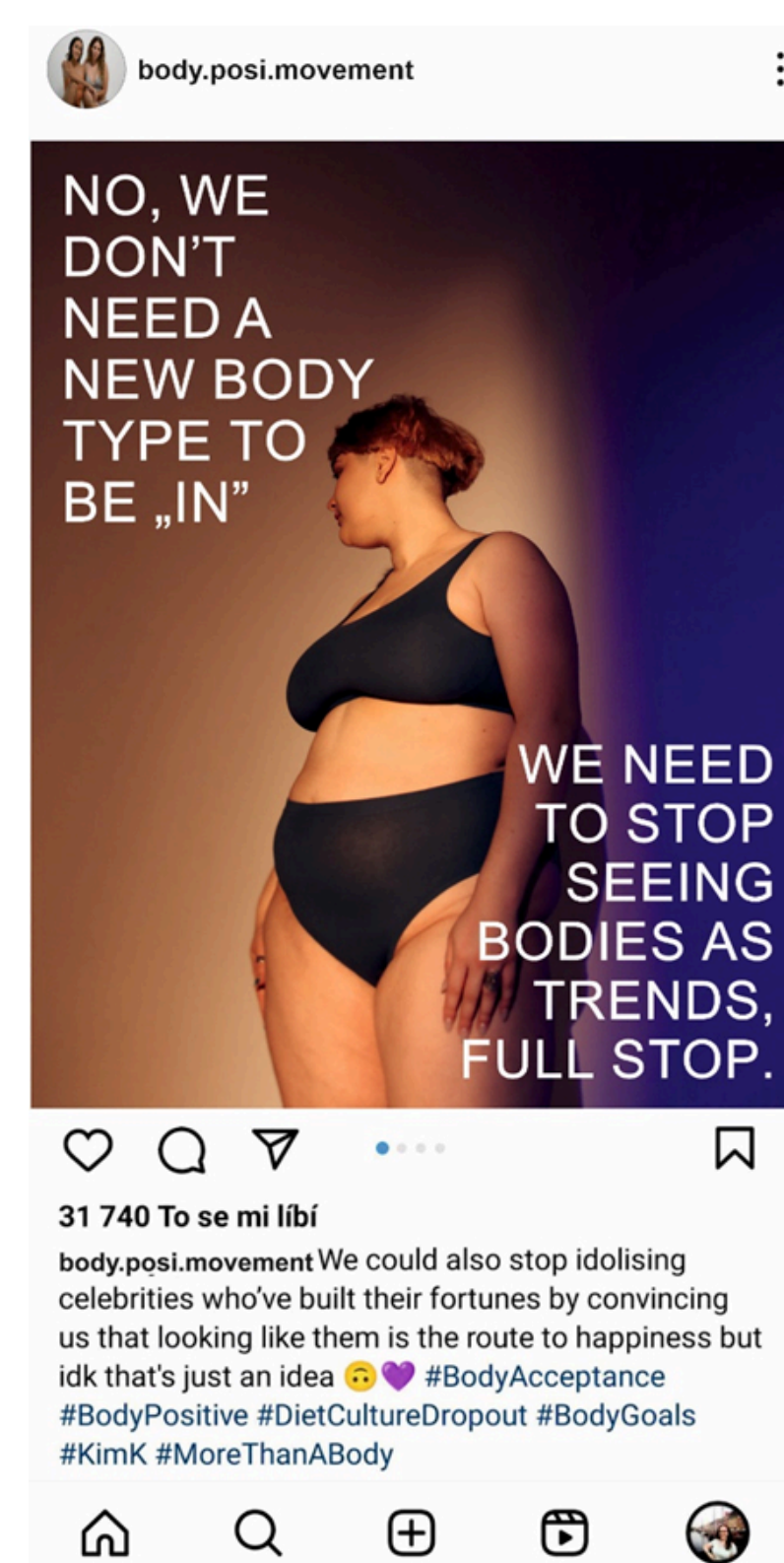
Limitations - ecological validity, malfunctioning scale to measure state self-objectification (TST)

Future research - multiple types of body portrayals, including sexualized and non-sexualized versions

References

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EXPERIMENTAL GROUP



CONTROL GROUP



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